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Pacific Partnership: “Casting” an international impact

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From Pacific Partnership Public Affairs

Cambodian students gained valuable medical knowledge aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) in casting techniques Aug. 4, during Pacific Partnership 2012 (PP12).

Forty-one students from International University and the University of Health Sciences joined PP12 medical professionals in the subject matter expert exchange (SMEE) aboard USNS Mercy to learn and apply new techniques in splinting arm fractures.

International University student Tan Indravina said learning was a lot different than sitting in a room and listening.



SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia (Aug. 4, 2012) -- Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Nina Thomas shows a Cambodian medical student how to make a temporary splint while others practice making casts aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) during Pacific Partnership 2012. Pacific Partnership, an annual U.S. Pacific Fleet humanitarian and civic assistance mission now in its seventh year, brings together U.S. military personnel, host and partner nations, non-government organizations and international agencies to build stronger relationships and develop disaster response capabilities throughout the Asia-Pacific region. (Photo by Kristopher Radder)

“I actually learned how to do it and use the tricks the doctors showed us and learned how to put the wrist in the right position to properly splint it,” she said.

The students spent most of the day learning and practicing splinting by applying the techniques on each other while PP12 doctors and hospital corpsman watched and helped.

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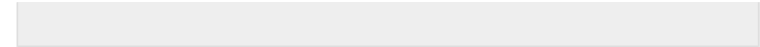
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U.S. Navy Capt.
David Tanen
said the goal

with working with the students was more than just teaching them new techniques.

“It wasn’t so much about what we were teaching today, but the fact that we were working with them and sharing experiences,” he said. “The biggest thing is long-term relationships. These are people we are able to work with in the case of future disasters and interactions.”

The students are working with PP12 over the duration of two weeks where they learn various medical skill sets as well as experience from doctors from around the world.

“The skills they have learned, whether it be ultrasound, IV, casting or some of the various other skills, they will be able to apply them in every day practice,” said Tanen.

Indravina said the experience has been very important and informative for her and the other students that participated.

“I think that exchanges like this are important because every country has a different style of teaching and doing things,” she said. “We went a lot of places on the ship and got a chance to see a lot.

I am really glad that I could be a part of this training, a part of the ship’s crew and a part of the whole mission. I learned a lot and I actually got to participate and have a really good time.”

SMEEs are a major part of PP12’s mission. They create an interaction where U.S. military, host and partner nations and non-governmental organizations get to work together to learn from each other and create lasting relationships that could prove vital in the case of a natural disaster response.

Now in its seventh year, Pacific Partnership is an annual U.S. Pacific Fleet humanitarian and civic assistance mission U.S. military, host and partner nations, non-governmental organizations and international agencies designed to build stronger relationships and disaster response capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region.

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